

# Understanding Change Complexity and Redefining Staff Resistance

August 1, 2012

**Educational Recovery Kick-Off and Training**

Lexington, Kentucky

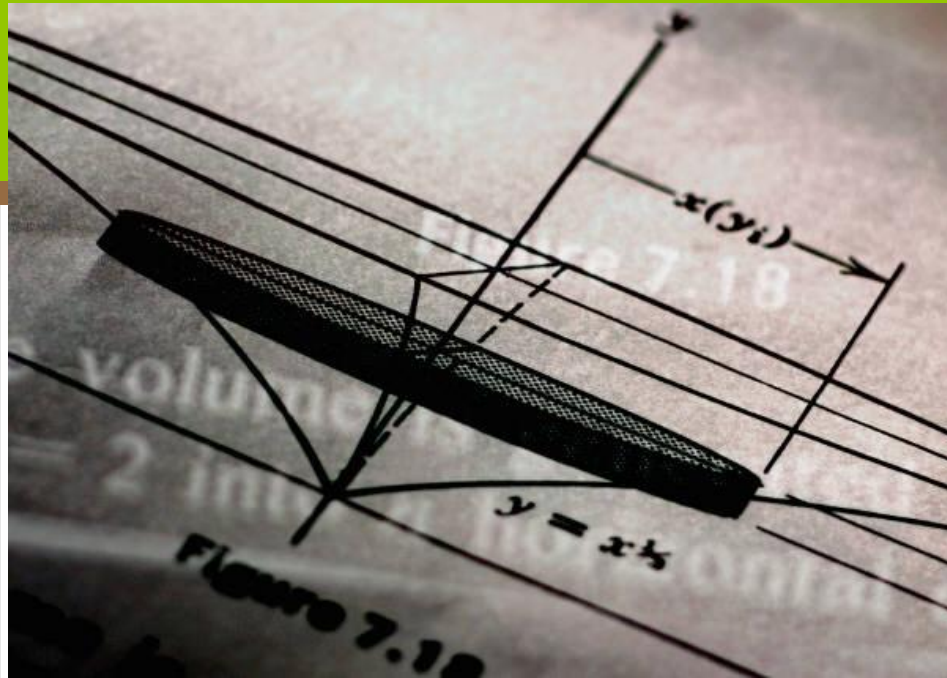
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The problem today  
is that we have a  
surplus of simple  
answers and a  
shortage of simple  
problems

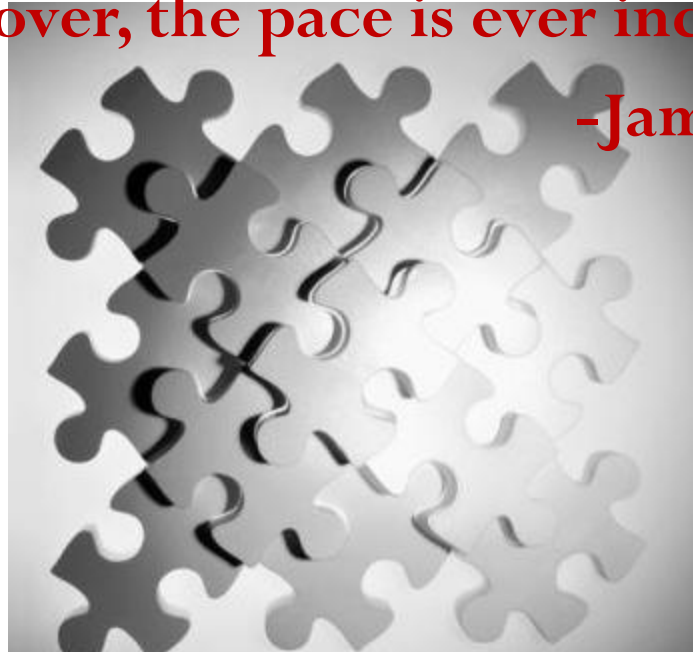
Syracuse Herald



# Complexity

**“The more complex society gets, the more sophisticated leadership must become. Complexity means change, but specifically it means rapidly occurring, unpredictable, nonlinear change. Moreover, the pace is ever increasing.”**

**-James Gleick**



# Sobering Observation

“All organizations (and systems) are designed, intentionally or unwittingly, to achieve precisely the results they get.” -R.

Spencer Darling, Business Expert



# In a crisis...

We call for someone with answers, decisions, strength, and a map of the future, someone who knows where we ought to be going—in short someone who can make hard problems simple....

--Heifetz





# Change, What is it?

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# Change Complexity:

## Understanding the Change Process

- The goal is not to innovate the most.
- It is not enough to have the best ideas.
- Appreciate the implementation dip.
- Redefine resistance.
- Reculturing is the name of the game.
- Never a checklist, always complexity.





# Survey: Leadership Style that gets results

- 3871 Executives from a consulting firm. Identified 6 leadership styles
  - Coercive—the leader demands compliance. (Do what I tell you)
  - Authoritative—the leader mobilizes people toward a vision (Come with me)
  - Affiliative—the creates harmony and builds emotional bonds (People come first)
  - Democratic—the leader forges consensus through participation (What do you think?)
  - Pacesetting—the leader sets high standards for performance (Do as I do, now)
  - Coaching—the leader develops people for the future (Try This)

# Change Complexity: Understanding the Change Process

**The goal is not to innovate the most.**

- Christmas Tree Schools- so many innovations and so little time
- Pacesetter/Lone Ranger- difference in competing in a marathon and developing the capacity and commitment to solve complex problems
- Need for reflective practices and feedback- learning about the learning



# Change Complexity:

## Understanding the Change Process

It is not enough to have the best ideas.

- Short-term successes- overwhelming opposition by staff
- Leaders need to recognize the weaknesses and strengths in their approach



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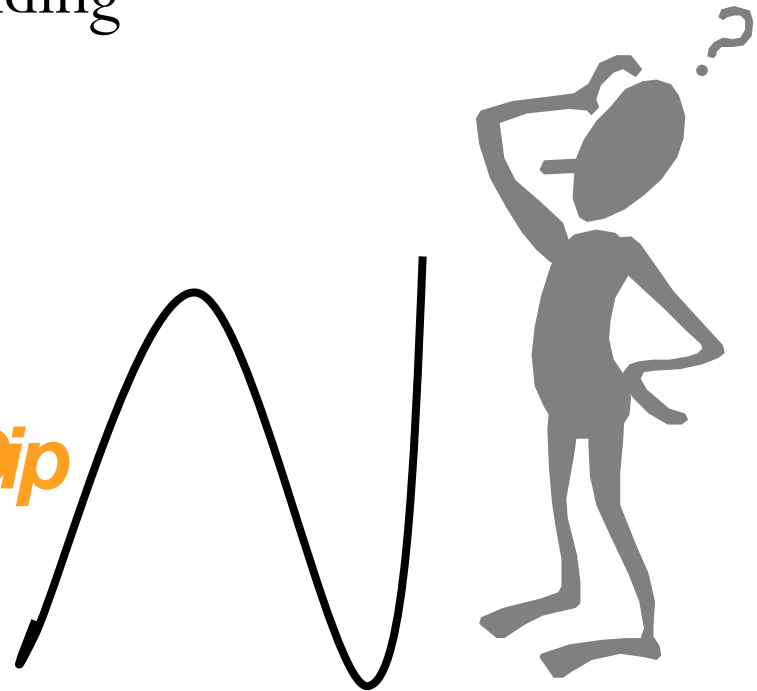


# Change is **COMPLEX**

What is Change?

- New Materials
- New Behavior/Practices
- New Beliefs/Understanding

*Implementation Dip*



*“Failure most always precedes success”*

# Resistance



- Resistance to change is best viewed as a **normal reaction**. Even the most cooperative, supportive staff may experience resistance
- **Don't** introduce change believing that you will experience nothing but resistance or that resistance will be severe.
- **Do** introduce change believing that staff want to cooperate, make the best of each task/situation, and that they will fully and enthusiastically support the changes as time goes by.

# How do you spot resistance to change?

Listen to the gossip and observe the actions of your staff. Note whether staff are missing meetings related to the change. Late assignments, forgotten commitments, and absenteeism can all be signs of resistance to change. Something as simple as listening to how staff talk about the change in meetings and hall conversations can tell you a lot about resistance.

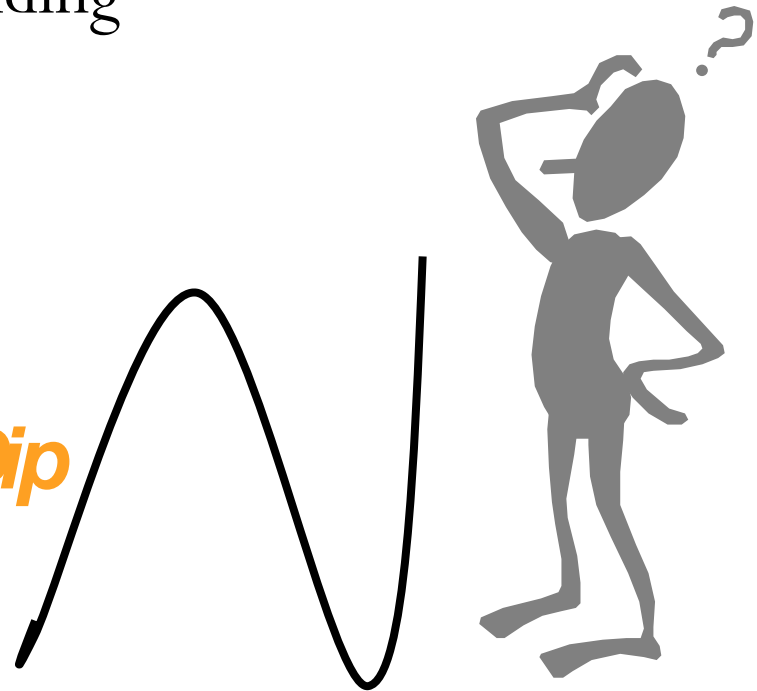


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- In an organization that has a culture of trust; transparent communication; involved, engaged staff; and positive interpersonal relationships, resistance to change is easy to see - and also much less likely to occur. Employees feel free to tell their boss what they think and to have open exchanges with managers.
- When a change is introduced in this environment, with a lot of discussion and staff involvement, resistance to change is minimized. Resistance is also minimized if there is a wide-spread belief that a change is needed.



# Eight Elements of Sustainability

Sustainability requires continuous improvement, adaptation, and collective problem solving in the face of complex challenges that keep arising. Fullan, 2005



# Sustainability

## 8 Elements

- Moral Purpose
- Commitment to change at all levels
- Lateral capacity building
- Accountability
- Deep learning
- Short-term and long-term results
- Cyclical Energizing
- Leadership

Leadership & Sustainability

*Michael Fullan*



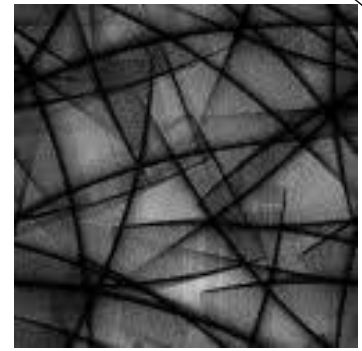
# 1. Public Service with a Moral Purpose

- A commitment to raising the bar and closing the gap of student achievement for all individuals and schools
- A commitment to treat people ethically— adults and students alike
- A commitment to improving the whole district, not just one's own school.

*“Moral purpose, defined as making a difference in the lives of students, is a critical motivator for addressing the sustained task of complex reform.”*

**Why do you want to be a coach?**

## 2. Commitment to Changing Context at all Levels



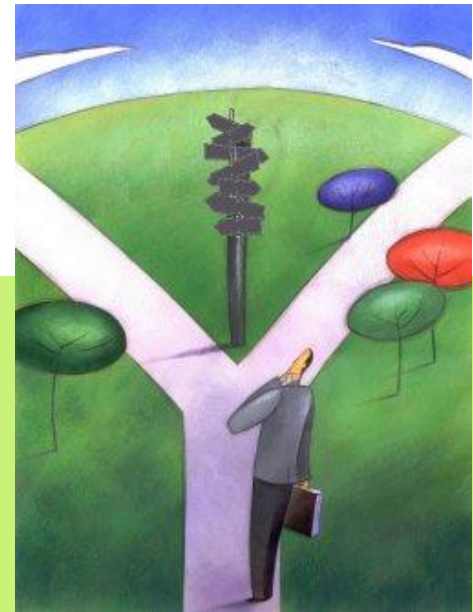
- Contexts are the structure and cultures within which one works.
- Context is a key “tipping point” to change  
“The power of context says that what really matters is the little things” (Gladwell, 2000)
- To change systems, increase the amount of purposeful interaction between and among individuals within the systems.
- Changing the system is an essential component of producing a “learning organization”.

# Changing the Context: Are principals gauging their moral compass?



# Changing the Context

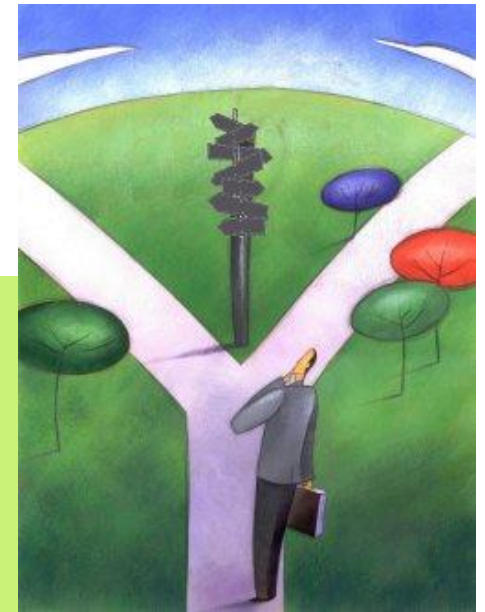
- “The power of context says that what really matters is little (the) things”, Tipping Point, Gladwell
- “Selecting and supporting good leaders is a crucial starting point from beginning to change the context in powerful, new ways. The leader’s job description, then is to help change immediate context”. The Moral Imperative of School Leadership, Fullan
- “People rarely change through a rational process of analyze-think-change. They are more likely to change in a see-feel-change sequence. The Moral Imperative of School Leadership, Fullan





# Changing the Context

- The role of the leader is to work through a process that does the following:
  1. Help people see new possibilities and situations
  2. Seeing something new hits the emotions
  3. Emotionally charged ideas change behavior or reinforce changed behavior, Kotter and Cohen, 2002
- “Context is social, not individual”
  - Curriculum, training, and credentials are not enough, leadership must focus on changing the working conditions and culture of their schools.



### 3. Lateral Capacity Building Through Networks

- Capacity building across peers is a powerful learning strategy
- Professional Learning Communities
  - People learn best from peers
- Complexity theory tells us that if you increase the amount of purposeful interaction and infuse it with the checks and balances of quality knowledge, positive outcomes will occur.



## 4. Intelligent Accountability and Vertical Relationships

- Accountability and capacity building  
“pressure and support”
- Collaboration
- Learning Communities
- Collectively creates coherence  
which make complexity easier to  
tackle



**“Too much intrusion demotivates people; too little permits drift, or worse”**

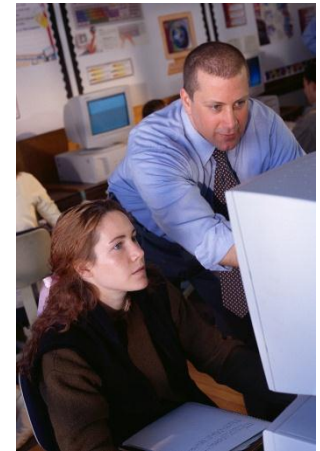
# 5. Deep Learning

## Data-driven

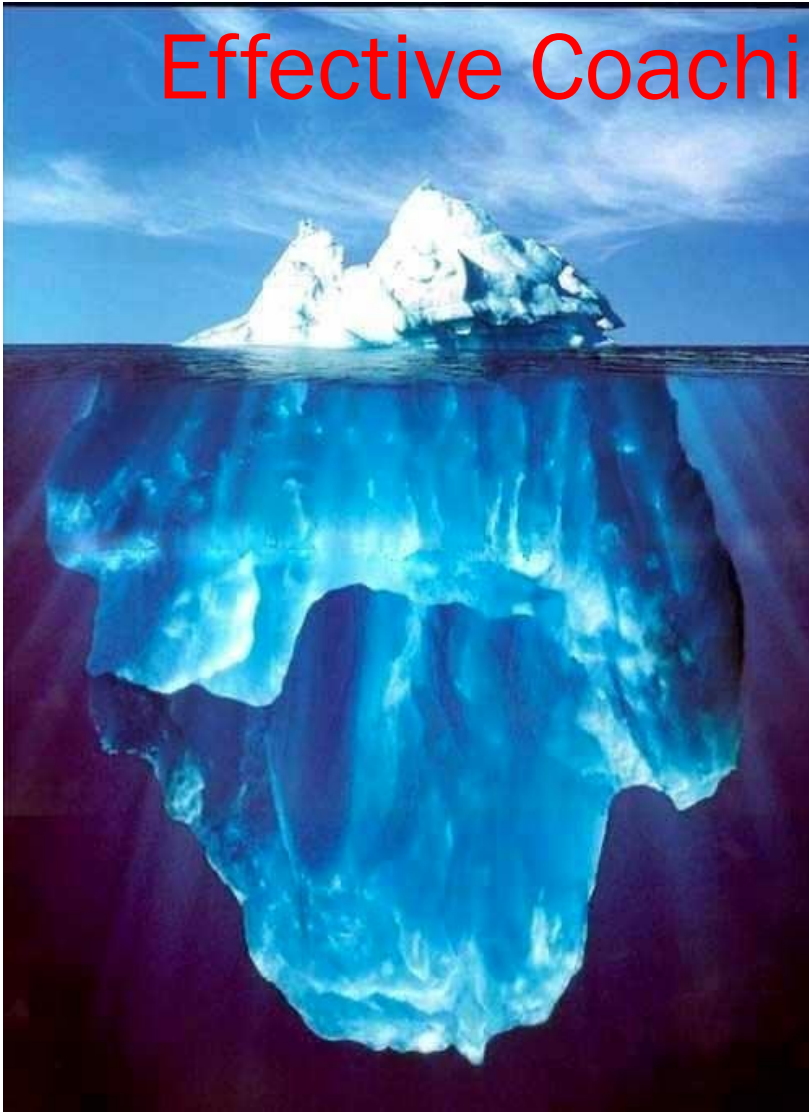
- Drive out fear
  - *You must learn to fail intelligently. Failing is one of the greatest arts in the world. One fails forward towards success. (p. 22, Thomas Edison)*
  - *Fail often to succeed sooner (Tom Kelley, IDEO)*
- Set up a system transparent data-gathering with mechanisms for acting on the data “Assessment for Learning”
  - U.S. ARMY After Action Reviews
    - *What was supposed to happen?*
    - *What happened?*
    - *What accounts for the differences?*
- All levels of system are expected to learn from their experiences.

## Collaborative cultures of inquiry

- Demands learning and experimentation and difficult conversations
- Constantly adjust, revise, abandon, expand strategies



# Effective Coaching and Deep Learning



Icebergs don't travel well if you are just trying to move the visible part. Many leaders try to take shortcuts by slicing off the visible part of the iceberg, assuming they have captured its full power.

You must pursue the depth of change in order to make effective and lasting change in the practices and beliefs of your teachers.

adapted from:

Leadership and Sustainability,  
Michael Fullan, 2005

## 6. Dual Commitment to Short-term and Long-term Results

- They are not mutually exclusive  
“Win the battle, lose the war”
- **Short-term** results are opportunities to build trust for long-term investments
  - Results gains confidence and a willingness to reinvest
  - Intervene early if necessary
- **Long-term**
  - Set ambitious targets
  - results demand short-term results

*Overtime time, the system gets stronger  
and fewer severe problems occur as they are  
preempted by corrective action sooner than later*





# 7. Cyclical Energizing

Sustainability is not linear,  
it's cyclical

2 Reasons:

## 1. Energy

“Energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of high performance” Loehr and Schwartz, 2003

## 2. Periodic Plateaus

“the set of strategies that brought initial success will not be powerful enough to maintain the initial trajectory”

*Each are essential and must be balanced in order to succeed forward to the next set of challenges*





*Leaders* are the stewards of  
*organizational energy*... They  
inspire or demoralize others first  
by how effectively they  
manage their own energy  
and next by how well they  
mobilize, focus, invest and  
renew the collective energy  
of those they lead. (p.5)

Any form of stress that prompts discomfort has the potential to expand our capacity—physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually—so long as it is followed by adequate recovery.

-Loehr & Schwartz, 2003



# Energy Recovery

- **Rituals—**

- daily, weekly routines
- Conserve energy- these “pull” us
- In contrast to *will and discipline*- these “push” us
- Require little conscience energy

- **Cyclical, Periodic**

- Take place over a longer period of time
- Time to be alone- reflection, solitude
- Opportunities for personal renewal



# 8. The Long Lever of Leadership

- Leaders are the primary engine of sustainability
  - Trained to understand systems and sustainability
    - Continuity and discontinuity of leadership
    - Sustainable leadership maintains improvement from one leader to the next
  - Effective leaders beget effective leaders
  - Focus on short-term and long-term outcomes
  - Build ensuring greatness,
    - “Level 5 Leaders”, Good to Great, Jim Collins, 2001



Leadership and Sustainability, Michael Fullan, 2005



# Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

*"...Actually, most people want to be part of their organization; they want to know the organization's purpose; they want to make a difference. When the individual soul is connected to the organization, people become connected to something deeper... the desire to contribute to a larger purpose, to feel they are part of a great whole, a web of connection"*

*Lewin and Regine*



# Sustainability

...Is the capacity of a system to engage in the complexities of continuous improvement consistent with deep values of human purpose.

